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DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

Vol. XI No. 3 February 2nd 1962 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

First Steps to Co-Existence

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is ready at any time to negotiate with the West German Government on a "minimum programme" for co-existence between the two German states, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, told the People's Chamber on January 24th.

"We stand by the proposals which we made at the beginning of December 1961 in this respect", Chairman Ulbricht stated. "We believe that the first step should be the establishment of correct relations between the governments of the two German states on a number of factual points: mutual recognition for the passports of the other state; no discrimination against the citizens of either German state in other countries; and the conclusion of a normal trade agreement between the Federal Republic and the GDR.

"In our original proposals we stressed that the military neutrality of the two German states would be a great step towards peace. If the Bonn Government has the serious wish to make even a modest contribution to the maintenance of peace, then we are ready at any time to open negotiations on our minimum proposals, or any other proposals which would serve the cause of peace."

Chairman Ulbricht stated that he was not very optimistic on the chance of negotiations, since hitherto the West German Government had flatly rejected every proposal made by the GDR. In recent months the West German Government had taken serious steps to make the situation more difficult, by persecuting citizens of the GDR who visited West Germany, banning sports meets between the two German states, and jailing West German citizens who had dared to visit the GDR. In addition, the West German Government had prevailed upon the NATO states to prevent GDR citizens from visiting those states, and done many other things which showed that its aim was to deepen the split between Germans in East and West.

"Despite all such measures, we have not abandoned hope that reason will prevail in West Germany, and that at least a minimum programme on correct relations may be agreed upon."

The "minimum programme for co-existence" submitted to the West German Government on December 1st 1961 included the following points:

1. The two German states should agree to respect the sovereignty of each other within the present borders.
2. The two German states should negotiate on their views on a German peace treaty.
3. The two German states should renounce atomic arms.
4. The two German states should support the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the Warsaw Pact states and the NATO states.
5. The two German states should negotiate on mutual recognition of passports, a governmental trade agreement, and upon their future relationship in the form of a confederation.

* * *

In the same session of the People's Chamber, Dr Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister, replying to a question on East-West negotiations on the West Berlin questions, stressed that in the

(cont. on next page)

Conscription for People's Army

The People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic voted unanimously on January 24th for the introduction of conscription to the People's Army, Navy and Air Force.

Under the terms of the law, men aged between 18 and 26 can be called up for an 18-month period of basic training. Arrangements are made for a call-up postponement in case of studies and for urgent family reasons.

Introducing the Conscription Law, General Heinz Hoffmann, Minister for Defence, announced that the first call-up would take place during the current year. There was no intention of expanding the armed forces above their present figure of 90,000, he stated, although the West German Bundeswehr had recently been increased in size to 420,000 men.

"We are maintaining our unilateral contribution to disarmament in order to keep the path open for an agreement on the limitation of the strength of the armed forces of both German states, and the establishment of a 'thinned-out zone of arms' in Central Europe", General Hoffmann stated.

He stressed that there was an immense qualitative difference between the armed forces in the two German states. The West German Bundeswehr was an army exclusively commanded by old nazi generals, including a number of war criminals, an army trained for aggression; the People's Army of the GDR was a workers' and peasants' army commanded by veteran anti-fascists, which was trained to guard the building of socialism.

Defence Minister Heinz Hoffmann himself served with great distinction as an officer in the International Brigades in Spain, and all other top officers of the GDR armed forces have fine records in Spain, the anti-nazi underground, or as prisoners in Hitler's concentration camps.

(cont. from front page)

Gromyko-Thompson talks in Moscow so far the American representative had confined himself to making suggestions about the access to West Berlin, including the suggestion that West Berlin should be linked to West Germany by means of a corridor.

"We cannot believe that this suggestion really represents the viewpoint of the US Government", Dr Bolz said. "The call for the establishment of a corridor across the territory of the GDR is an old annexationist dream of Dr Adenauer, and the US Government knows full well that such a claim is completely unrealistic and is only intended to prevent agreement.

"It should be clear to everybody today that the main question in connection with West Berlin is not the question of access routes, but of changing West Berlin from a centre of international tension into a demilitarised Free City.

"The settlement of all questions connected with West Berlin depends upon the cancellation of the Occupation Statute, the step-by-step withdrawal of the occupation troops, and the ending of all espionage and propaganda directed against the GDR and other socialist countries.

"Such a settlement is inconceivable without the establishment of normal relations between the Government of the GDR and the West Berlin Senate. In order to ensure undisturbed civilian traffic to and from West Berlin it is necessary for the relevant agreements to be concluded with the GDR."

MORE ON HEUSINGER

By the Editor

On December 12th the Soviet Union requested the United States to arrest General Adolf Heusinger as a war criminal. Heusinger, formerly Adolf Hitler's Chief of Operations, is today Chairman of the Standing Military Committee of NATO, and has his residence in Washington.

At the same time as the Soviet Union made its request for Heusinger's arrest, it published documentary evidence of his crimes, consisting of 150 pages of photostats of official nazi documents, implicating Heusinger directly or indirectly in such crimes as planning aggressive war, and ordering the slaughter of Soviet civilians, including women and children.

West German propagandists could not completely ignore these documented charges, so they started a campaign of "nibbling at the edges" to try to convince world opinion that Heusinger was a much maligned gentleman.

First they seized on a photograph erroneously published in a Soviet newspaper (not part of the official evidence) with a false caption: this proved that the charges against Heusinger were a fraud, West German newspaper stated. When this campaign fizzled, they hurled themselves with howls of glee on one of the nazi documents. This document, dated August 26th 1940, instructed Heusinger's Operations Department to draw up plans for the possible nazi invasion of Switzerland. "Heusinger was on leave on this date, so he cannot have planned the invasion of Switzerland", the West German Defence Ministry announced happily.

Whether this is true or not is hard to determine, but it is completely irrelevant since Heusinger, as head of the Operations Department, was responsible for such plans, just as he was responsible for nearly all the other plans for Hitler's invasion.

But significantly enough, no West German propagandist or publicist has dared to comment upon, or even quote, the documents which form the core of the Soviet charges against Heusinger, the undeniably authentic documents showing that he ordered the murder of Soviet women and children.

Let me quote just one of these documents. On December 24th 1942 Heusinger sent the following dispatch to all Wehrmacht Army Groups on the Eastern front: "Troops are entitled and obliged to use every method in the fight, including measures against women and children. Any sort of reluctance would be a crime against the German people."

There is plenty more evidence of the same sort, but this evidence has been ignored by the West German propagandists, and by the US State Department, which stated that the Soviet demand for Heusinger's arrest was a "crude and ludicrous propaganda exercise unworthy of notice."

And Heusinger continues in office as one of the top men in NATO.

Winning Friends?

West German President Heinrich Luebke paid a "win friends and influence people" visit to the African states of Liberia, Guinea and Senegal in mid-January. During his visits he scattered presents and credits like a visiting monarch.

President Luebke's real attitude towards the African nations was shown on March 16th 1959, when he stated at a press conference in South Africa: "South Africa has had great experience in dealing with native problems... The native problem here is in good hands. In other parts of the continent they have not yet made good use of the South African experience in this field."

Spain Vet Honoured

Franz Dahlem, leading German Communist veteran, was decorated with the "Karl Marx Order", highest distinction of the GDR, on the occasion of his 70th birthday on January 15th. Franz Dahlem won international fame in 1936 when he played a key part in the organisation of the International Brigades of anti-fascists who hurried to the support of the Spanish Republic.

Mr Dahlem today occupies a leading position in the Ministry of Education in the GDR.

Partisan Doctor Dies

Professor Petros Kokkalis, anti-nazi Greek partisan doctor, and Minister of Health of the Provisional Democratic Greek Government in northern Greece in 1947, died in Berlin on January 18th.

Professor Kokkalis, a leading heart surgeon, played a prominent part in medical research in the GDR, where he had been living and working since 1949. In 1961 he was decorated with the GDR "Banner of Labour".

Longer Call-Up for W. Germans

All parties in the West German Parliament agreed on January 19th to an extension of the conscription period for the Bundeswehr from 12 months to 18 months. As a result of this measure the size of the Bundeswehr will be increased from 350,000 to 420,00 men.

The Social Democratic Party, which has hitherto offered token opposition to government measures to increase the strength of the Bundeswehr, declared its full support for the Adenauer Government's latest step.

THE COLD TERROR

How Bonn Throttles Opposition

By Frederick Ford

The West German state presents a shining face to the world today. It is a prosperous state, with all the apparent trappings of orthodox western democracy — apparent freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and free elections.

Behind this shining outward surface, however, West Germany maintains a very thorough-going system of political oppression. It is not a bloody terror such as that of the nazis, for political opponents are never executed or murdered, and only rarely beaten-up by the police; instead the West German state uses a system of "cold" intimidation, designed to make left-wing political opposition difficult, extremely unpleasant, and economically ruinous.

The broad scope of this creeping terror is shown by a few statistics. During the year 1961, according to incomplete figures, the West German police and courts were working on the "investigation" of political charges against some 8000 left-wing political opponents of the regime, including members of the banned Communist Party, oppositional Social Democrats, and active members of anti-nuclear groups. These harmless-sounding investigations mean that the persons concerned have been called before the police or examining magistrates, often many times, to give accounts of their activities; in very many cases their homes or places of work have been searched by the police in the hope of finding "incriminating evidence"; and in a large proportion of the cases employers have been urged to sack and blacklist the men and women concerned.

It is important to note that there is no time-limit on such investigations of alleged offences by the police and the courts; many of the cases were originally opened as long ago as 1954, and are still dragging on today.

A sharpened form of this administrative hounding of non-conformist citizens is presented by "arrest on suspicion". Figures collected by the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Berlin, again incomplete, show that 375 West German progressives were arrested on suspicion of "anti-state" activities during 1961. In some cases they were held for only a few days or a week or two before being released on bail or cleared of the charges, but in very many cases the men and women concerned were held for many months, often in the hope that they would provide evidence against their "accomplices".

The third form of persecution is the actual opening of court proceedings. A total of 278 progressives are known to have been brought to trial during 1961, and sentenced to an average of eight months imprisonment. The actual term of imprisonment in the majority of cases was short; but the victims of all these three various forms of repression find it extremely difficult to get proper work when their investigation, remand imprisonment, or court sentence is ended.

It must be stressed that none of the classes of persecuted persons listed above are charged with crimes of violence, with espionage, or with other offences generally recognised as criminal. Although the crimes with which they are charged often have dangerous-sounding titles — treason, membership in a secret society, or organisation of an anti-constitutional association — the court cases have shown in all cases that their actual actions fell into one or more of the following three categories:

1. They had called for agreement and negotiations between West Germany and the German Democratic Republic.

2. They had actively opposed the nuclear armament of West Germany.

3. They had some connection with the Communist Party, illegal in West Germany since it was banned in 1956.

In very many cases the "overt act" which was construed by the West German courts to constitute "anti-constitutional actions endangering the state" was the distribution of the official texts of Soviet diplomatic notes, or peace proposals made by the Government of the GDR, documents which had been quite openly published by newspapers in all parts of the world, including even some newspapers in West Germany.

In a number of cases, West German courts have imposed prison sentences on former members of the banned Communist Party for actions taken before the 1956 ban on the party.

Here, in some detail, is a record of the West German "cold terror" in the month of December 1961:

1. On December 1st Dusseldorf Political Court sentenced 10 Ruhr workers to prison terms averaging nine months each. The persons sentenced included Heinrich Nickel, a Social Democratic town councillor. They were found guilty of "endangering the Federal Republic" by visiting the GDR, and discussing there with trade unionists the peaceful solution of the German problem.

2. On December 2nd Bamberg Political Court sentenced Ottomar Breuning to seven months imprisonment for lending three friends copies of a banned Communist newspaper. He was found guilty of "offending against the free-democratic basic order".

3. On December 5th Hamburg Political Court sentenced three young men to 15, 8 and 6 months imprisonment for distributing unlicenced anti-nuclear-weapon pamphlets.

4. On December 7th Hamburg Political Court sentenced Herbert Reich, owner of a religious publishing house, to nine months imprisonment for printing and publishing the text of a speech delivered to the United Nations by Khrushchov, and other international documents. He was found guilty of "endangering the existence of the Federal Republic".

5. On December 8th Flensburg Political Court acquitted insurance agent Guenter Hoffmann, who had been charged with "criminal association with the All-German Working Group for Agricultural Problems", banned by the Supreme Court as an allegedly Communist organisation. Hoffman had spent seven months in prison awaiting trial.

6. On December 8th Munich Political Court sentenced four men to prison terms averaging 8 months for publishing "The Germany Plan of the People", an official document proposing the peaceful solution of the German problem by means of negotiations. One of the men jailed, Johann Hiltl, spent many years in a nazi concentration camp.

7. On December 9th Lueneburg Political Court sentenced Manfred Fackel to 27 months imprisonment for distributing pamphlets calling for the neutralisation of Germany. He was found guilty of being "ringleader of an anti-constitutional organisation". He had been held in prison on remand for 12 months awaiting trial.

8. On December 20th Karlsruhe Political Court sentenced shop-steward Willi Kumm to five months imprisonment for visiting the GDR and discussing German reunification with trade unionists there. Kumm spent many years in nazi concentration camps.

9. On December 22nd Dusseldorf sentenced three Social Democratic shop-stewards from Duisburg factories to terms of 12, 9 and 7 months imprisonment for visiting the GDR and discussing German reunification with trade union colleagues. During the trial Heinz Fack, one of the accused, gave evidence that in the preceding 12 months he had had to change his place of work 23 times because he was black-listed.

10. On December 22nd Dortmund Political Court sentenced three workers to prison terms averaging nine months for their activites in the "Movement for All-German Understanding". One of the accused, Emil Tomys, served a long prison sentence during the nazi era.

11. On December 22nd Lueneberg Court sentenced Erich Roehlk to 29 months imprisonment. After his release he will spend five years under police supervision. He was found guilty of appealing publicly for the cancellation of the ban on the Communist Party in West Germany. Before the trial he had been held in prison on remand for 13 months.

12. On December 29th Dusseldorf Political Court sentenced two former members of the Communist Party to 16 months imprisonment each. They were found guilty of "endangering the state" by standing as independent candidates in the provincial elections of 1958.

Bonn Prosecutes Anti-Nazis

The West German Government opened court proceedings on January 23rd in an attempt to ban the "Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution" (VVN), by far the largest association of those men and women who actively resisted Hitler.

Preliminary proceedings for the ban started in October 1959, when the West German Government applied to the Federal Administrative Court for the VVN to be prohibited because "its activities are directed against the free democratic order of the Federal Republic".

The first two days of the trial were devoted to legal arguments, mainly as to whether the Federal Administrative Court was entitled to try the case, and hearings were then adjourned to the end of March. Main government charge against the VVN is expected to be that it is a "successor organisation" of the Communist Party, which was banned in West Germany in 1956. Many of the members of the VVN are in fact former members of the Communist Party; since the Communists constituted the great majority of those Germans who actively fought Hitler, this is scarcely surprising.

Commenting on the trial on January 24th, "The Times", London, stated: "In recent years the VVN has come before the public eye here in political matters, frequently protesting over the alleged return of Nazis to positions of power in West Germany."

RE-UNIFICATION – ILLUSION & REALITY

By Willi Siebenmorgen

(A number of readers of GERMAN REPORT have recently asked: "Could not the two German states be reunited fairly easily if there was a bit of give-and-take on both sides?" The question is sometimes asked in the German Democratic Republic too. On January 17th 1962 "Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, dealt with the question in an article which we reprint, slightly condensed, on these pages)

On August 13th 1961 we converted the Berlin line of division between east and west into something which it had, in fact, been for some years: the state frontier of the GDR. At the same time we took further measures for the protection of the whole length of our state frontier. Simultaneously, however, we call for the peaceful solution of the German problem; and some citizens of the GDR find this contradictory.

At a recent conference a speaker said that some of the women workers in her factory put the question like this: "The two German states should both concede a bit, so that the unity of Germany could be established, and the West Berlin problem could be solved."

Put into other words this means: "Let us take a bit of imperialism and a bit of socialism, and stir them up a bit, and perhaps something will come out of the mixture".

Let us take a closer look at this recipe. It might go like this: The GDR reduces the strength of the People's Army by 50%, and Bonn does the same with the Bundeswehr. The two are then combined under commanders with equal rights: perhaps war criminal Heusinger, and GDR General Heinz Hoffmann, who was an officer in the International Brigade. Then the GDR restores some of the nationalised factories to the monopolists; and Bonn "nationalises" a few big factories. Then the courts are staffed with a mixture of West German nazi judges, and the progressive men and women who have become judges in the GDR. The GDR relinquishes part of its excellent and progressive school system, in return for the one-class village schools and religious intolerance in education which are rife in West Germany. It is easy to see that there is plenty of room for "compromise arrangements" in which each partner takes one step backwards.

Is there the slightest trace of realism in such suggestions? Can the workers of the GDR relinquish their nationally-owned factories? Would the monopolists in West Germany really allow their factories to be nationalised?

It is clear that there is no halfway house between capitalism and socialism. It is simply impossible to make a "mixture" of a monopolists' state and a workers' and peasants' state. Nobody can seriously expect the workers and peasants of the GDR to abandon their state, which is the final result of a century-long struggle by the German working class; and on the other hand the West German bourgeois state cannot "grow into" socialism through a series of reforms. The bourgeois state will have to be overcome by the strength of the masses of the people.

It is worth noting that this idea of a "third way" between capitalism and socialism has been shown by German history to be impracticable. During the period of the Weimar Republic (1918—1933) the right-wing Social Democrats went through the motions. It started with President Ebert who (in November 1918) concluded a pact with the Kaiser's general staff. The result was the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the white terror, and the Free Corps. The German Trade Union Federation, under the leadership of Leghien, concluded a working agreement with the monopolists. The result was social reaction, the brutal breaking up of the shop-stewards demonstration in 1920, inflation and crisis. The right-wing Social Democrats entered into coalitions with bourgeois parties, and helped to build "Armoured Cruiser A" (the beginning of official German rearmament after World War One, ed.). These were the concessions made by the Social Democrats; but the reactionaries made no concessions — they backed the nazis and supported the storm troops. The end of this "third way" was fascism, armament and war.

The problem we have to face is not "German unity" as such. We have to ask the question: "What sort of unity do we need in order to live in peace?"

The united German state which was founded by the junkers in 1871 was not stable. It was a unity under the command of Prussian militarism, based on an alliance between big business and junkerdom. The longing of the German people for unity was misused by the ruling class, who managed to get the German people to march off to the First World War.

Then came the Second World War. This ended not only with the unconditional surrender of Hitler Germany, but also with the destruction of the fascist state. The imperialist powers had plans at that time for the final partitioning of Germany. They presented partition plans, such as the Morgenthau plan, at the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. Many of the German imperialists were ready, in view of their defeat, to go along with the plans of American big business.

It is a matter of historic fact that the Soviet Government was able to prevent these first plans for partition. The Soviet Union called for the formation of a united German state on a democratic basis.

Luckily 1945 brought not only the defeat of the German imperialists. In one part of Germany, for the first time in German history, the people's democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class triumphed over the enemies of the nation. Since then the GDR has taken the road of peace, democracy and socialism.

The German reactionaries have remained true to their anti-national tradition. In the western zones they crawled to US big business, because of their fear of popular forces. Their slogan was: "Rather a West German separatist state than a peaceable democratic united Germany". Today West German Defence Minister Franz-Joseph Strauss goes around proclaiming that Bonn cannot afford to pursue a national policy: West Germany must become part of an Atlantic Federation under the leadership of the USA.

Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union, the leading party of German big business, declared officially last summer that the reunification of Germany would mean the extension of NATO to the Oder-Neisse frontier. This would not mean even a bourgeois united state on the lines of the Weimar Republic, but a NATO state under the command of an American general, a state completely subservient to the alien military rule of monopoly capitalism. This would mean a bloody Third World War; it would be reunification in the mass grave.

In other words, imperialism cannot and will not restore a unified German national state. Today it is quite plain that the solution of the German national problem entails the elimination of imperialism; the whole of Germany will have to take the path of socialism and democracy.

In this situation, reunification depends upon the strength of the GDR, the speed of socialist construction, the growth of the peace forces in West Germany, and the overcoming of German imperialism and militarism in West Germany.

If people object that this will take too long, then we can only reply that this is not our fault. In good time we made repeated proposals for the establishment of a democratic Germany. We gave repeated warnings, but our warnings were ignored. In 1952 the Soviet Union submitted the draft for a peace treaty with the whole of Germany. In 1954 we proposed all-German elections on the basis of the electoral law of the Weimar Republic, a very far-reaching proposal. But Bonn turned down these proposals, and deepened the division of Germany by integrating West Germany in NATO.

The lessons of history since 1945 make the conclusion unavoidable that as long as imperialism rules in West Germany, German reunification is impossible.

It will therefore be some considerable time before reunification becomes possible; it will be impossible until imperialist rule in West Germany has been brought to an end, until the forces of peace in the whole of Germany have forced the Bonn militarists to abandon their crazy nuclear war plans and to quit the stage. And this development depends to a considerable degree upon us and the work we do to strengthen the construction of socialism in the GDR.

What practical steps can, however, be taken now? First of all, there is the question of establishing normal relations between the two German states, in order to prevent the Bonn militarists from doing even greater damage than they have already. The Socialist Unity Party has proposed a minimum number of measures upon which it is possible to agree, without either of the two German states having to abandon anything of its social system. Only proposals of this sort are realistic today, proposals which will help to promote peaceful coexistence between the two German states, steps towards an eventual confederation through steadily broadening cooperation.

This policy would ensure peace for the entire German people, and there could be peaceful competition between the two systems; in our epoch this will lead to the victory of peace, democracy and socialism.

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Visiting Two Factories

By George Lohr

The Mansfeld region in the south-western area of the German Democratic Republic is dotted with huge dumps of slag, the dross of the copper ore mined there in large quantities. This copper is processed in the Rolling Mill in Hettstedt, a romantic town cuddled in a valley that lies in the very heart of the Mansfeld district.

The rolling mill is one of the two factories I visited recently, along with a group of other foreign journalists, in order to look around. We wanted especially to check on the mood of the workers. According to western press reports, GDR workers are supposed to be "sullen and faceless prisoners of a system they hate", particularly since the frontier to West Berlin was closed in August 1961.

I can report there was nothing sullen about the workers we talked to at random as we walked through the various workshops equipped partly with modern and partly with somewhat antiquated machinery. These workers not only had faces and mouths but also a considerable volume of voice, necessary to overcome the deafening clatter of all the heavy hardware in action. The discussion, almost all of it intelligent, turned mostly on international affairs and production, and there was almost none of the maddening phrase mongering which one often used to encounter.

There wasn't a single worker I talked to — and a later check showed that my colleagues had the same experience — who showed any consternation over the closing of the border in Berlin. Not living in Berlin, these workers were also not much concerned about the problem — a real problem in Berlin — of not being able to visit relatives living in the other part of the divided city.

One young worker, Horst Franke, told me of a meeting held in his shop on August 14th, the first work day after the closing of the border. He said the discussion was very sensible, and a number of men in the crew had said that this step should have been taken long ago. "Understand me right", he said to me, "we are not against the West German people, but we are against the Nazi militarists and other trouble makers over there".

With tousled-haired, stocky Guenther Hoerhold I had a talk about the "Production Challenge" issued recently to all GDR workers by the government and unions. During the past few years wages have risen so rapidly that they were out of kilter with production. The workers were therefore asked, not to accept higher norms as the western press has said, but to help eliminate production bottle necks and to show more labour discipline, such as not quitting work, as it was the custom in the past, 10 or 15 minutes before the actual end of the shift.

Hoerhold told me that this naturally gave rise to some very heated discussions in the beginning, but then the workers themselves came forward with all sorts of proposals of how to produce more in the same time for the same pay. Many admitted they had been taking money home that they were really not entitled to, and if there is loafing on the job now by some individual his fellow workers themselves call him to account.

Tramping through a rolling mill that gives employment to 9,000 men makes one commiserate with the policeman's lot, and especially his poor feet. But the mill was just a little promenade compared to the tour which we took the next day, when we visited the huge and sprawling Agfa Wolfen Film plant. This plant, which formerly belonged to the IG Farben concern, covers an area of some 316 acres. It produces some ten million square yards of film annually, and is outdistanced only by the Kodak Film Company in Rochester, New York.

We could not see much of the actual film production because this work has, of course, to be done in the dark or in very dim light. But while we could not enter these shops we were delighted with what came out of them at quitting time for the first shift—a group of attractive girls in their white smocks, their eyes blinking at the first contact with the rays of the afternoon sun.

But Agfa Wolfen Film also engages extensively in the production of various synthetic fibres, such as the fibre "Dederon", equivalent to nylon. When one sees this fibre in the early stage of production, a slimy, sticky mess, it seems almost impossible to believe that from this will finally emerge the fine thread that is woven into stockings and nighties.

In this large sector of the plant there are also many women workers, and in fact 8,000 of the 15,000 Film Agfa employees are women. Because of this, management and the unions have paid special attention to the needs of their women workers. The plant's nursery and kindergarten now accomodate 1,000 small fry. Before nationalisation only 24 mothers could leave their kids in these institutions. The plant also has its own maternity hospital, with pre and post natal care, and all free. A sort of sideline for the enterprise is the maintenance of six farms where food is raised not only to supply the work canteens, but also to prepare ready-made meals which the working women can take home for themselves and their families.

We talked to a number of women and they reported that they make good use of all these various facilities. There was nothing sullen about them either, and every one I talked to had a positive attitude toward the state and the government. Of course, not all shout hallelujahs over the closing of the border, but they do understand that something had to be done to keep the fruit of their labour from being smuggled out of, and Nazi saboteurs into, the GDR.

How about the scientists in such an enterprise? The man who took us around was Dr Karl Hoesslinger, a rather chubby middle-aged man who is the director of the fibre department of the plant. He has been with Agfa Wolfen Film for many decades, already during the IG Farben days, and he is not a member of the German Socialist Unity Party. Yet he has this important post, is also director of the GDR's Research Institute for Fibre and a member of a similar institute of experts in this field for all the socialist countries. He gave us all the impression of a man satisfied with his work, with his living conditions and with the way of life in his country.

We also asked about the value of the goods produced in the two plants visited. It's $125 million per year at the rolling mill, and also $125 million at Agfa Film, with the latter doing export business with 60 countries. Not bad for a country that is often described as "nearly" bankrupt and "economically isolated."

"W. BERLIN WITHERS ON VINE" - Daily Express

"West Berlin is a city withering on the vine. A city living on tick — facing the necessity of loans from the Federal Government in Bonn and from the Americans simply in order to keep going.

"Tonight General Lucius Clay, President Kennedy's personal representative in Berlin, assured the chief of West Berlin's Department of Economy and Credit, Herr Karl Schiller, that he can rely on more American cash, and on the establishment of new American businesses in the Communist-encircled city.

"The cash is a stiff item. Last year West Berlin received £15,000,000 in American credits. For the coming year, so I was assured by an official in Herr Schiller's department, about £20,000,000 is expected.

"I have been staying in a giant hotel of supreme luxury, built with American money three years ago. The place is like a morgue. The staff outnumber the guests... Things in (West) Berlin are getting tougher all the time. Retail trade is down by 10 to 12 percent... The latest official figures, for October–November, reveal that 19,000 people left West Berlin, and 6,400 came in... Small advertisements screaming for labour fill the newspapers. Attractive flats stand forlornly empty...

"Industry, still employing 320,000 people in West Berlin, has been taking precautions. There has been a quiet organisation of what the Germans call 'the second band' — far to the West.

"There the industrial giants — including electronics, radio, building materials, heavy machinery, and car firms with internationally known names — have been setting up 'reserve production lines' just in case.

"Berlin's West is now a dreary, aimless sort of city. A Frenchman visiting Berlin after a year's interval said to me: 'West Berlin must be one of the few cities in Western Europe where there is no difficulty in parking your car'."

("Daily Express", London, January 19th)

GERMAN REPORT comments: This article poses two questions: The first is: Why is West Berlin "withering away"? The reason is quite simple; for many years, the flashy prosperity of the "bastion of the free western world" was largely based upon the exploitation of the German Democratic Republic. The "open frontier" between West Berlin and East Berlin, the capital of the GDR, made it possible for West Berlin factories to employ tens of thousands of cut-price workers, who enjoyed the advantages of subsidised socialist housing, social services, utilities and foodstuffs in the GDR, but sold their labour power to West Berlin, taking advantage of the currency racket. In addition the open frontier provided every opportunity for smuggling, currency wangles, and other forms of exploitation of the socialist economy of the GDR. GDR economists have estimated that this situation cost the GDR about £300,000,000 annually. A large part of this drain constituted an involuntary and unwilling subsidy for West Berlin. Since August 13th 1961, the open frontier between West Berlin and GDR has been converted into a normal state frontier, and smuggling and other forms of exploitation have sunk to negligible proportions.

The second question is: Does the GDR want West Berlin to wither away? The answer is a clear negative. When West Berlin becomes a Free City, as proposed by the GDR and the Soviet Union, it will be able to trade freely in all directions, and its big electrical and engineering industries will find almost unlimited markets in the Socialist countries, for instance. The main reason for the present shaky financial position of West Berlin is that it is being artificially maintained as a cold-war bridgehead.

FLASHBACK TO BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE

In October 1961 the British Labour Party held its annual conference at Blackpool, passing resolutions calling for "a measure of de facto recognition of the German Democratic Republic" and condemning West German military bases in Britain.

The full report of the conference has now come to hand, and GERMAN REPORT rather belatedly presents some short extracts from speeches on the German problem, most of which were not reported in the press at that time:

Mr P. Lister (Coventry Borough Labour Party): It seems to me that it is most necessary that the people of the world and the governments of the world are realists. We must recognise that in the Eastern part of Germany a government exists which does in fact control the destinies of huge numbers of people and which has the power to enforce its rule and is prepared to enforce its rule over that part of the world. For the Labour Party, or for anyone else to refuse to take any recognition of such a government seems to me to be hiding one's head in the sand and to be asking for trouble. Once one has recognised that then it follows that we must go on to recognise that the City of Berlin is an enclave in a territory controlled by a government, and an enclave in which there exist troops of other nations...

Now is the time for the Labour Party to speak, and speak clearly, and say that we recognise de facto — and let us hope quite soon de jure — the regime in Eastern Germany.

Mr S. A. Miller (Poale Zion — Zionist Labour): The bringing to Britain of Hitler's soldiers — I say advisedly not Germans, but Hitler's soldiers — not as civilian individuals, but in uniform, militarily equipped and in command of men, is almost a desecration... The first batch of German troops have come and gone, but before future conditions arise, and for as long as Hitler's soldiers are in command, let Conference say that it needs to be convinced why the deep-seated emotions which we all share have to be trampled underfoot.

Mr D. T. Mumford (Birmingham, Northfield, Constituency Labour Party): Could a Socialist Government (in Britain) really wish to continue to be tied to a military and economic alliance which comprised in the main such bastions of peace-loving democracy as Adenauer's Germany? With her economic power back in the hands of Herr Krupp; her army well salted with ex-nazi officers, and her dream of recapturing lost territories over the Oder-Neisse line carefully inculcated into her children?

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

On another page of this issue we reprint an interesting article about the possibility or impossibility of the reunification of Germany today. Since it has become an article of faith for western politicians to claim that it is all the fault of the "wicked Russians" that Germany has not been reunited, it may be worth while dragging out of the dusty archives the following passage from an address to the Overseas Writers Association by John Foster Dulles on January 10th 1949. Dulles began by saying that it would be possible to solve the then very acute Berlin dispute at any moment by agreeing on the currency question (western introduction of separate currency in 1948 split Berlin and Germany) and continued: "The deadlock is of great advantage to the United States for propaganda purposes, secondly, the danger of settling the Berlin dispute resides in the fact that it would then be impossible to avoid facing the problem of a German peace treaty. The United States would then by faced with a Soviet proposal for the withdrawal of all occupation troops and the establishment of a central German Government. Frankly I do not know what we could say to that."

Since then, of course, things in Germany have not stood still, and today the establishment of a central German government is not on the agenda. But I find Mr Dulles' sudden outburst of frankness of considerable historic interest.

Hanging Judges

Over the past few years GERMAN REPORT has hammered away at the question of the nazi "hanging judges" who are back on the bench again in West Germany. For new readers I should just recall the facts: careful research in nazi files and reference books has shown that well over one thousand West German judges and public prosecutors occupied similar posts in nazi Special Courts and military courts. These nazi courts did not dispense "normal justice" against burglars, forgers, and so on: they had the special task of imposing sentence, generally sentence of death, on opponents of the nazi regime both in Germany and in occupied Europe.

The renazified West German state ignored for a long time the well-documented charges that it was employing nazi murderers as judges, but finally last year, largely under the pressure of opinion from abroad, it announced that it was taking measures to rectify the situation. After labouring like a mountain it produced a mouse, stating that any old nazi judges who liked to resign could do so forthwith without losing their pension rights. If they did not resign voluntarily by June 1962, then some vague "measures" might be taken against them.

To date precisely 12 of over 1000 incriminated judges have taken advantage of the offer. The others are sitting tight, confident that they will never be called to account for crimes such as sentencing to death a Pole who had hidden a Jewish boy, or another Pole sent to his death for giving some food to an escaping British POW.

Unlimited Baseness

This week I have been looking through some more old nazi court files, and would like to tell you quite shortly about another of these cases. On July 10th 1944, Kassel Provincial Court sentenced to death a one-legged 60-year-old German on charges of "undermining the resistance will of the German Reich." Main charge against the accused, who was officially described by the court as "a grumbler, of limited intelligence", was that he had spat when he saw a picture of Hitler on the wall. "His hate propaganda knew no limits, and did not even respect the person of the Fuehrer, our supreme military commander" the sentence stated. "This shows the unlimited baseness and disgusting character of this man."

The amputee, a man named Paul Kroll, was executed. What happened to the judges? You will have guessed the answer. One of them, Herr Massengeil, has been promoted and is today Director of Marburg Local Court; another, Dr Henseling, is Director of the Provincial Court in Kassel — the same court in which he sentenced Paul Kroll to death.

The Beards

The state frontier through Berlin has produced some minor results, as well as the big major result of stabilising the position of the GDR. Some of these quirks result from the fact that a number of the passport control officers at the crossing points are not as well-trained as they might be. A few days ago a West German friend came to visit me in East Berlin: when he arrived I was astonished to see that he was clean-shaven, although he had always previously sported a beard, a very fine ginger one.

"When I produced my passport at the crossing-point, the GDR passport man pointed out that my passport photo showed me without a beard" he told me. "I argued with him fruitlessly, and finally I had to go and have a shave before he let me through."

At lunch the next day in the East Berlin Press Club I told the story to another friend. "Now let me tell you my beard story", he said when I was finished. "Yesterday the passport officer at the frontier crossing point rang me up, and said that Herr X was there and said he wanted to come to see me. The passport man was very worried because Herr X was clean-shaven, but his passport photograph showed him with a beard. I told him the only thing to do was to keep Herr X at the frontier post until his beard had grown again, and he finally let him through."

But in all fairness to the frontier guards I must say that generally they show more sense. Several recent visitors from West Berlin have told me how GDR passport officials had given them money to make a phone call, or even lent them larger sums to take a taxi. But the moral to the story obviously is — don't grow a beard, or if you have one on your passport, don't shave it off.

Garbage Can-Can

East Berlin's big variety theatre, Friedrichstadt Palast, announced a week or two ago that it was selling off cheaply a lot of costumes used in past shows which were now blocking up the store-rooms. There was a big run on the costumes, including a large number of can-can costumes, for use as fancy dress in the current carnival season, and my eye was caught by the note in a Berlin daily that many of these theatrical props had been purchased by the clubhouse of the East Berlin dustmen, or garbage disposal operatives.

I should admit that the only reason for printing this note is to smuggle in the headline above.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III, Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in the German Democratic Republic by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 des Presseamtes beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik